

Dear Mr. Bamberger.

I know it is past the deadline, but please allow me to interject two comments regarding the very informative NRPB hearing on Dec 19, 2006. Please note that I submit this as an independent sound engineer with many years' experience in working with libraries and archives, not as part of Columbia University.

1. Regarding copyright restrictions

The current accepted model for audio preservation calls for a two-prong approach: one, preserve the original audio carriers within accepted environmental parameters; and two, generate digital audio files that then have to be maintained, often at considerable cost. For many libraries this is a very expensive proposal, and the only way to justify it (and/or get funding for it) is thanks to what I like to call the trump card of digital: greatly increased access. Severe copyright restrictions are the wrench that can derail the whole system, so materials are not digitised.

2. Regarding training

It saddens me when current engineers seem to think of themselves as somehow superhuman or with extremely rare skills. Let's minimise their accomplishments and tremendous acumen, theirs is a trade and it can be taught. We can do it with brain surgeons and rocket scientists. I also feel that we must phase out the era of "it has personally worked for me so far" in favour of a more scientific, peer-reviewed basis. Especially with the tools available today to analyse audio, it seems destructive not to use objective measurements (although I am always the first to admit that the ear is our best measurement instrument)

Thank you for indulging me

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